



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

REVIEWS.

THE VIRGINIA EDITION OF POE.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE. Edited by James A. Harrison, Professor in the University of Virginia. Twelve mo., 17 vols. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company.

THE Virginia Edition of Poe marks an epoch in Poe study and investigation and must furnish fresh material for the literary critic. This is high praise for its editor, Prof. Harrison, but it is just praise. The great service done in this edition is in finally establishing the text of Poe with all accessible variorum readings so that there can no longer be any serious questionings. The remarkable thing is that we have had to wait thus long, more than fifty years after Poe's death, for this very natural examination and verification of accessible records. This was largely because Griswold had been left Poe's literary executor; and while it was known that his personal attitude was hostile to the poet, still it was supposed that, with access to many manuscripts and most of the material, he had been reasonably conscientious in the care of Poe's text, whatever his personal feelings toward the man himself. What is our amazement to find, upon going back to the original sources, that five of the notorious literati miscellanies are seemingly Griswold's own coarse substitutions for the more delicate work of the artist; and in other instances alterations and insertions are found at will, changing often the entire spirit of passages and concealing vituperations of the living behind the shelter of the dead. Besides, there is plenty of material not used by Griswold and never before published in any edition. It is a case of singular retribution. Poor Griswold is to be sincerely pitied. Whatever may be the final outcome, Griswold, who blackened Poe's reputation for so many years, will in turn be condemned by Poe's fame so long as Poe is read and studied and the details of his life and work investigated afresh.

It is well-known that Poe wrote and rewrote, sold and resold, published and republished pieces, particularly his

Poems and Tales. To some critics like Prof. Woodberry this has seemed essentially blameworthy and dishonorable; the present editor sees in these several versions, each one altered and improved in most cases, a steady progress to higher reaches in art. To take these several published versions, collate them, compare them further with the received texts like Griswold's, Stoddard's, Ingram's, and Woodberry's, as well as to unearth many finds of minor writings and miscellanies—this is the lasting value of the present edition.

This minute and arduous textual comparison of all known and accessible texts has been the work of a former graduate student at the University of Virginia, under the immediate guidance of Prof. Harrison, Mr. Robert A. Stewart, who received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in June, 1901, upon the presentation of the thesis: "The Prose Text of Edgar Allan Poe's Writing." Likewise, the Poems which form a special volume in the edition have been edited with Introduction and Notes by Prof. Harrison's colleague at the University of Virginia, Prof. Charles W. Kent; but here too the textual comparisons are made by Dr. Stewart and the general editorial supervision and the discussion of poems of doubtful authorship are contributed by Prof. Harrison himself. It is interesting to see the frankness with which the two editors can work independently, and in certain details arrive at quite different conclusions. Indeed, in his valuation of the poems and rejection of doubtful work as Poe's, Prof. Kent is singularly reticent and restrained compared with the enthusiasm growing out of interest and love which Prof. Harrison everywhere displays.

The first and last volumes of the edition are Prof. Harrison's own especial care, viz., the Biography and the Letters relating to Poe—letters written both by Poe and his friends—thus leaving fifteen volumes for the works. Of these, Volumes II. to VI. comprise the Tales; Volume VII. is the Poems; Poe's Criticism fills Volumes VIII. to XIII., and his Essays and Miscellanies Volumes XIV. to XVI. These nine vol-

umes of Criticism and Miscellanies contain much presented here for the first time or reproduced in a new form, and here, if anywhere, an occasional mistake in ascription may possibly be made. Nevertheless, the editor has been careful to give his reasons for inclusion very explicitly, and in most cases he presents a strong argument. But take the criticisms contained in Volumes VIII. and IX. which are reproduced from the *Southern Literary Messenger* from May, 1835, to January, 1837, during Poe's connection with this journal. It is true that Poe states in a letter to the *Richmond Compiler*, dated September 2, 1836, that "the *Messenger* had but one editor" and again "since the commencement of my editorship in December last ninety-four books have been reviewed;" but whether this implies that Poe wrote every review in the *Messenger* during this period, and particularly all ninety-four of the reviews referred to—which, however, are not named—or also accepted, edited, and published certain miscellaneous ones from other sources, may perhaps be questioned. In some of the papers relating to the educational addresses and didactic writings of the Presbyterian friends of Mr. White, the publisher, it is certainly odd to think of Poe as being really interested. One point at least may be made: there is no reason given, nor is one plain, why the order of the criticisms and notices as they appeared in the *Messenger* should be changed to just as miscellaneous a second arrangement, nor why certain minor ones are omitted and others retained. Just what was and what was not Poe's in these early numbers of the *Messenger* will hardly ever be determined with exact certainty; still that the great bulk of the criticism and miscellaneous notices in its pages at this time is Poe's may be considered assured.

While this is justly the "Virginia Edition," as the work of Virginia editors, it must not be too readily assumed that Poe is as Virginian as his editors. Local influences upon Poe are pardonably but probably unduly emphasized. The editor portrays old Richmond life and the notables who then moved in her limits with genuine local pride, but from Poe's

works these had no perceptible influence. He is America's most ungeographical writer, and this is not the least reason that he has found acceptance in all lands. The most that can be said seems to be that Richmond and Baltimore social conditions offered peculiar temptations to one with Poe's sensibilities.

The strong side of this edition, therefore, is its painstaking investigation of all possible lights which could illumine the text of Poe's works. The features of literary criticism are thus subordinated to the facts, documents, and data brought forward. Not that there are not bits of clever and clear-cut analysis and judgment, as in dealing with the Chivers controversy, but usually the editor has regard for bringing together new matter and additional testimony to care too precisely for literary form and a nice sense of proportion and valuation.

No student of Poe can henceforth do without this edition. This is its real significance and value. Yet it is equally true that this general attitude of adding to the work of others makes it also necessary to refer to these earlier works. In this way the Biography singularly lacks completeness and finality in itself; it is written so far with all others in view that the reader, to be equally intelligent, must take these down and inform himself first of their contents. It does not seek to sum up and be an end for itself in a critical sense, but its character is that of the work of an investigator who has added to the knowledge of others and brought out new material which he believes important enough to emphasize, maybe out of its due proportion, just because it is new and modifies existing opinions. For the estimate of Poe's work as literature we still must have recourse to earlier authorities, and one of these estimates is prefixed to one of the volumes—Mr. Mabie's address at the unveiling of the Poe bust at the University of Virginia.

This is said in characterization, and does not detract from the actual merits of this edition. What it set out to do, it has done admirably by indefatigable work and unbounded

enthusiasm. At last we have Poe's text as he wrote it, and not many additions or subtractions are likely to be made. But the final awarding of Poe in literature, the characterization of the man, the insight into his personality, the strength as well as defects of his work and its ultimate appeal, the explanation of his genius and the contradictions in his character and life—these are still left for the later literary critic and biographer, whenever he shall come, who will yet make use of this edition as his chief material.

FICTION AS A STUDY.

A STUDY OF PROSE FICTION. By Bliss Perry. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1902.

The practice of writing fiction having become a serious employment and all the world nowadays being novel readers, very naturally an examination of the laws and being of prose fiction is a fit subject for serious study. More than one of our universities have included among their electives a course on the structure and style of the novel, and the writer of the present volume is a former Princeton professor, now editor of a great monthly literary magazine, who has written short stories and novels himself, and has been called upon to look over thousands of manuscripts of others—one who has been trained in the theory, and has both studied and practiced the art, of composition. Yet how hard the novel is to subject to laws is seen from the circumstance that the author has to be guarded in his statements at almost every turn—there has been such infinite variety of methods employed. But in this welter and confusion he is eminently fair. Open-mindedness and an absence of dogmatism is the striking quality and great value of this work. Only once, when the author is dealing with the theory of M. Zola and his school of "experimental fiction," does he seem to break out into anything like impatience and meet argument by still further appeal. In his view fiction must be fiction—*i. e.*, something feigned—and the subjective element, the personality and mind and spirit of the author, cannot but enter in. "No novelist possesses the impartiality of nature."